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No. 3-Ranked Softball Opens 2017 Season With High Expectations

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SOFTBALL

No. 3-Ranked Softball Opens 2017 Season With High Expectations



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SAVANNAH, Ga. - The No. 3-ranked Armstrong State University softball squad opens up the 2017 season on Friday, traveling to Melbourne, Fla., for the Florida Tech Marriott First Pitch Classic.

The Pirates have represented the Southeast Region at three of the last four NCAA DII National Championships, advancing to the national semifinals for the second time in school history in 2016. However, Armstrong State has been picked to finish second in the Peach Belt in a preseason poll of the league's coaches, and new head coach Kim Dean will learn quickly what kind of team the Pirates will be in 2017 as the squad will play its first 25 games of the year away from home.

Armstrong State returns 13 players and seven starters from last year's squad that went 43-15 overall. Three Pirates were named preseason All-Peach Belt Conference performers - senior first baseman **Hannah Reppert**, senior pitcher **Tori Bates** and sophomore shortstop **Macy Coleman**.

Reppert has also earned preseason DII All-America honors from Fastpitch News and was named as one of the NFCA's DII Player of the Year watch list student-athletes. The senior can certainly continue her assault on the Armstrong State and PBC record book this season by coming close to last year's production of a .379 batting average, .558 on-base percentage, .834 slugging percentage to go with 20 home runs and 52 RBI, but the Pirates have plenty of other offensive muscle they

can flex in 2017.

Coleman and sophomore catcher **Logan Harrell** also reached double digits in home runs with 10 each, and as a team, the Pirates led the league in home runs per game and ranked 15th nationally.

Pitching and defense, of course, also figured into the Pirates' success last year. Armstrong State led the PBC and ranked 12th nationally in double plays turned per game, and the team ERA of 1.87 ranked second in the league and 18th nationally. Besides Bates, NCAA All-Tournament selection **Jane Trzaska** returns in the circle, along with sophomores **Morgan Duff** and **Sierra Peebles** to give Armstrong State one of the most experienced returning staffs in the nation.

The Pirates will take on Florida Tech and Nova Southeastern on Friday at the Marriott First Pitch Classic. Click on <https://portal.stretchinternet.com/fit/> for live coverage of all the games this weekend, including live video of the Pirates vs. the host Panthers at 12:30 p.m. on Friday.



ARMSTRONG STATE UNIVERSITY

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ARMSTRONG STATE UNIVERSITY IS ONE OF THE PREMIER NCAA DIVISION II COLLEGIATE ATHLETIC PROGRAMS IN THE NATION, FEATURING 13 NATIONAL CHAMPIONS, 97 PEACH BELT CONFERENCE CHAMPIONS, 148 NCAA CHAMPIONSHIPS APPEARANCES AND 302 ALL-AMERICANS.

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